

REMARKS

The claims now pending in the application are Claims 16 to 36; Claims 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, and 36 are independent.

In the Official Action dated November 12, 2002, Claims 16, 19, 23, 26, 30 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,579,419 (Yaguchi); Claims 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Yaguchi '419 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,680,226 (Takayanagi) and Claims 22, 29 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Yaguchi '419 patent and the Takayanagi '226 patent.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections respectfully are requested in view of the following remarks.

Initially, Applicants' attorneys gratefully acknowledge the courtesies extended to them in a personal interview on February 11, 2003. In that interview, Applicants' attorneys discussed various novel features of the present invention and distinguished the claimed invention over the cited art. It was agreed that the limitations of the independent claims are neither anticipated nor obvious in view of the cited art. The Examiner indicated that he would conduct further examination upon receiving a written response to the Official Action. In this regard, the Examiner identified several additional references which may be deemed pertinent.

In view of the Examiner's comments after the personal interview, the Applicants have prepared and submitted herewith an Information Disclosure Statement making of record the various references identified to Applicants' attorneys at the personal

interview. Applicants have reviewed the art newly cited by the Examiner and submit that the present claims are allowable thereover.

In particular, newly cited U.S. Patent No. 5,923,437 issued based on the parent application of the present application. Applicants submit that the invention recited in the claims of the present application are not anticipated by the claims of the parent '437 patent.

Applicants submit that the four remaining references all fail to disclose or suggest at least the feature that sheet processing information is stored in a detachable storage medium, as disclosed and claimed in the present application.

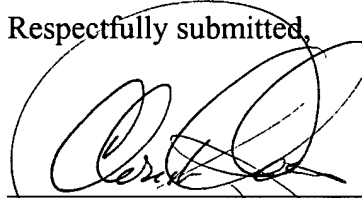
For the above reasons, Applicants submit that independent Claims 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, and 36 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Claims 17 to 21, 24 to 28, and 31 to 35 depend from Claims 16, 23 and 30, respectively, and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Moreover, each of these dependent claims recites additional features in combination with the features of its respective independent base claim, and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action and the personal interview, and submit that the application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 32,078

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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